

Lt. Gov. Luallen Honors Exemplary Volunteers; Service from 2014 recognized during ceremony at Governor's Mansion

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Note to editors: Award category descriptions and summaries of winning nominations are available by calling Anya Weber at 502-564-6786.

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 29, 2014) – Lieutenant Governor Crit Luallen honored 14 groups and individuals from across the Commonwealth for their volunteer and service contributions today at a ceremony in Frankfort.

Lt. Gov. Luallen and Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) Secretary Audrey Tayse Haynes presented the Governor's Service Awards at the Governor's Mansion. The awards honored service completed in 2014.

The Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS), a division within CHFS, coordinates the annual awards program. The Governor's Office launched the volunteer awards program in 1975. Since 1995, the KCCVS has administered the program.

Lt. Gov. Luallen said the event was a chance to honor the state's volunteers and national service members for their efforts and the positive changes they have made.

"Volunteer service is the greatest gift you can give to your community, and we are here today to recognize that," she said. "Your service has met critical, immediate needs and has paved a path for a better future for thousands of Kentuckians."

Secretary Haynes also congratulated the honorees and said the event gave focus to a group that doesn't seek out attention for their service.

"We know that you don't volunteer for praise or acknowledgment, but your service has earned it," she said. "Your achievements inspire the rest of us to make a difference and widen our own circles of impact through volunteering. Thank you for your time, energy and efforts."

A panel of independent judges with experience in volunteerism and/or service chose award recipients in 14 categories.

KCCVS Executive Director Joe Bringardner said the judges' task of selecting the honorees from several exemplary nominees is difficult.

"These recipients represent all of those who serve across the state – and across the world -- to help children overcome bullying, to build and repair homes for families, and to stop crippling illnesses in places that don't have access to the medical advantages that we do," he said. "Whether it is through a national service group like AmeriCorps, a local charity or a self-started cause, every volunteer effort makes an impact."

For the fifth year, a special First Lady's Award honored a Kentuckian who has gone the extra mile to mentor youth to develop a strong foundation and prevent future dropouts, an effort that complements First Lady Jane Beshear's Graduate Kentucky initiative.

Virginia Braswell, full-time volunteer executive director of the Owensboro Habitat for Humanity for more than 20 years, received the Lifetime Achievement Award.

A list of award winners and their nominators follows.

2015 Governor's Service Award Recipients

- John Salyers, Kentucky Ambassador Award, Independence/Kenton County. Nominated by Adam Howard
- Melissa Phelps, Challenge Award, Warsaw/Gallatin County. Nominated by Kristen Edwards
- The Fuller Center, Faith-Based Group Award, Louisville/Jefferson County. Nominated by Donald Keller
- Lesley Nord, First Lady's Award, Shepherdsville/Bullitt County. Nominated by Jennifer Cave
- Rotary Club of Cadiz, Group Volunteer Service Award, Cadiz/Trigg County. Nominated by Brenda Southwick
- Virginia Braswell, Lifetime Achievement Award, Owensboro/Daviess County. Nominated by David Clark
- Kentucky College Coaches, National Service Group Award, Statewide. Nominated by Kristen Hedgebeth
- Wanda Higgs, National Service Individual Award, Owensboro/Daviess County. Nominated by A. Raven McCrady
- Housing Opportunities of Northern Kentucky (HONK), Nonprofit Organization Award, Covington/Kenton County. Nominated by Sister Cathy Bauer
- Adrian D. Wallace, Veteran Volunteer Service Award, Lexington/Fayette County. Nominated by Jennifer Wallace
- Susan Guess, Volunteer Service Award, Paducah/McCracken County. Nominated by Maurie McGarvey
- Catherine Mitchell, Volunteer Coordinator Award, Lexington/Fayette County. Nominated by Jessica Proskin
- Hailey Simpson, Youth Volunteer Service Award, Goshen/Oldham County. Nominated by Leah Simpson
- Hannah Irvine, Youth Volunteer Service Award, Ashland/Boyd County. Nominated by Bill Burch

For more information about Kentucky's AmeriCorps programs, call the KCCVS toll-free at 800-239-7404 or visit the KCCVS website at www.chfs.ky.gov/dfrcvs/kccvs.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services, the Department for Public Health, and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.